Address

by

His Excellency Dino Grandi

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy

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SPEAKERS' TABLE

HIS EXCELLENCY DINO GRANDI
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy

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YOUR EXCELLENCY: On behalf of the Board of Directors and the members of the Foreign Policy Association, I welcome you as the official representative of a great people and as a vigorous advocate of disarmament and international cooperation.

We Americans owe much to your country. From Italy we have inherited some of the richest legacies of our civilization: with music, painting, literature, architecture, and science, Italian genius has generously endowed our culture. We are grateful to Italy for its brilliant gifts throughout the ages. In the modern world, we owe a special debt to the humble folk of your country. Our great cities, our transcontinental communications, our aqueducts, our means of transportation exist by virtue of the industry and toil of countless numbers of your countrymen.

I am glad, therefore, of the opportunity to-day, speaking not merely to the large audience here but also to the larger radio audience, to pay this tribute to Italian genius, courage and vigor.

We welcome Your Excellency also in your own right. Your leadership in the cause of disarmament was strikingly demonstrated by your successful initiative at the League of Nations' Assembly last September for a year's truce in armament building. Since then, forty-five countries have accepted the principle of your proposal. That is an encouraging response.

In the field of international cooperation, you have risked the scorn of traditional diplomatists who pride themselves on what they call their "realistic pessimism." You have frankly recognized the danger to peace inherent in a world armed to the teeth. You have recognized that modern civilization, if it is to survive, must be "defended as a whole, for to-day it forms an organic unit."

When you say, as you did a day or two ago, that international relations no longer are the concern merely of a limited group of bankers and merchants but, on the contrary, are the vital concern of all people, and when you urge that a stable foundation for peace can be built only through the education of the masses, the Foreign Policy Association, whose cardinal principle is education in international affairs, is heartily in accord with you. Therefore, we shall listen with especial interest to your address to-day.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Foreign Policy Association and members of the radio audience: I have the honor to present to you His Excellency Dino Grandi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy.

His Excellency Dino Grandi

I WISH first of all to thank you for your cordial reception, and you sir, for your kind words of welcome. I did not want to leave New York before talking to your association and so I accepted your invitation.

I understand that you are interested to hear from me something about the problem of disarmament. It is, indeed, in my opinion the central problem of the foreign international situation. Mine will be, not a speech, but only a friendly brief talk with you. The problem of disarmament is so complex, so important that it would require more time for a complete and close examination, so I am merely summing up the point of view of my government on this subject.

The Italian policy on disarmament is based on the following fundamental points:

1) First of all, we think that the reduction of armaments has to be considered as a moral as well as a juridical obligation on all governments concerned.

The peace treaties have imposed upon certain nations restrictions and limitations of a military nature. Such special restrictions and limitations have been enforced with the clear understanding that they should prepare the ground for a general reduction and limitation of armaments. All the nations who have signed and ratified the peace treaties and the Covenant of the League of Nations are therefore duty-bound to reduce their armaments. It is a solemn pledge they have undertaken to fulfil.

Our sense of justice, and our common sense as well, make it inconceivable to us, both from a juridical and from a moral standpoint, that some nations should forever be tied to a status of partial disarmament, while other nations would continue to enjoy an unrestricted freedom in armaments.

One cannot expect to lay down the foundation of a solid system of peaceful and confident cooperation among nations unless the fundamental principle of equality is duly respected and safeguarded.

Thirteen years have elapsed since the end of the war, and during that period of time the world has evolved and new conceptions have been taking shape in the public mind. Today we are bound to look forward and not backward, and if we want to build on a solid ground, we must—as Mussolini said in a recent speech in Naples—dismiss the feelings of the past

and let ourselves be guided only by the principle of justice and fairness toward all.

2) The second point I want to mention is the one concerning the question of security. We have never thought of minimizing the importance of security in the solution of the disarmament problem. We fully realize that disarmament cannot be conceived as something which should prove detrimental to the notion of security. On the contrary, we agree that disarmament must imply a greater security. But we cannot share the view that an absolute security is the condition *sine qua non* for starting any measure of disarmament.

Such a theory makes of security an essentially subjective notion, that is the result of one's feelings, the expression of a frame of mind. How are we going to measure the security of a country? How and when can a state of absolute security be said to exist for a country? If that country makes security dependent solely upon the strength of its armaments, then the logical conclusion will be that it will consider itself in full security only when its military strength is greater than the strength of any of its potential enemies or combination of potential enemies.

But, should we accept such a notion of security, then there would be no question of disarmament! Instead of a reduction, security would lead to a competition of armaments.

For us too security is, indeed, an essential element of peace, but we believe that security itself derives from the harmonious development of two factors: the pacific settlement of international disputes and the general reduction of armaments; that is, from arbitration and disarmament. As I have said a few nights ago at the Council on Foreign Relations, we believe that a problem of security independently from disarmament and arbitration does not exist. If the possibility of a State trying to force the solution of a dispute by the strength of arms did not exist, and if the predominant power of armaments did not exist either, then the problem of security would not even be raised. It is raised solely because competition in armaments still exists and because the superpower in armaments is bound to weaken the sense of justice on one side and to raise feelings of insecurity and mistrust on the other.

The conclusion I have arrived at is that the present condition of the world justifies and commends the starting of a process of disarmament and that every step toward the reduction of armaments will bring to the world a greater security.

In other words, if we want to make any progress toward a better organization of the peace of the world, we must try to look upon security rather as a result than as a condition of disarmament.

3) But—and this is the third point I wish to submit to you—apart from the juridical and ethical aspects of the problem of disarmament, there is another one which in the present world situation is very essential, and which I am going to put to you in these terms: There is no doubt that the world suffers to-day chiefly from a lack of confidence. The world—and particularly Europe—is under a vague but widespread feeling of uncertainty as to the maintenance of peace in the future years. So that, in the end, the financial and economic problems are essentially problems of pacification.

To solve this problem one must go to the root of the evil. Now, we are convinced that at the very bottom, the political uneasiness is generated chiefly by the mutual fear and distrust arising out of armaments and that the first step to restore confidence should be taken in the direction of a general reduction of armaments. Such reduction would attain a double result: A material one, that is, the possibility of devoting large sums of money to productive purposes, and, at the same time, a psychological effect consisting in the improvement of mutual confidence among nations.

These are the guiding principles of the Italian policy on disarmament. They show the lines along which we are moving and the goal toward which we are tending.

We know, of course, that the problem can be viewed from different angles and with different conceptions, and although we are convinced of the soundness of our own position, we don't ignore nor do we pretend to deny any consideration to these different views. I mean to say that we realize all the complexities and difficulties of the problem and, looking into it in a realistic way, we are fully aware that its solution could only be reached gradually, step by step, maybe by way of successive solutions of compromise. And we are convinced that a steady progress will be attained when every nation will have learned to deal with the question of reconstruction in a spirit of equity and with an impartial appreciation of the rights of all concerned.

I hope, gentlemen, that you will acknowledge that Italy is acting in all honesty and sincerity for the success of disarmament.

At the London Naval Conference we felt we could not adhere to the theory of the so-called "absolute needs" in the matter of armaments, because such a theory, if accepted, would have made any attempt toward a general reduction of armaments a hopeless task. As you know, the theory that we upheld was that of the "relative needs." We felt, thereby, that once an agreement is reached on the ratios and levels of the respective military strength, the way is open to a progressive reduction. On the same

occasion we also declared our policy, saying that Italy was ready to reduce her armaments and her military budget, to the lowest level, provided an equitable balance of military strength could be reached among the nations.

After the London Conference, we did not give up the hope of finding a solution to the difficulties which had prevented a naval agreement among European nations, but on the contrary right away we tackled the question in a spirit of cordiality and conciliation. We were very glad to arrive last March, to those bases of agreement which represented an honest, practical, and fair solution of compromise. It is true that the preliminary agreement of March 1st did not finally materialize, much to our regret, but notwithstanding we continued our negotiations with our English and French friends. I, for my part, am still wishing and hoping for a final equitable agreement.

Then, lately, last September at Geneva, I took the initiative for a truce of armaments, which in my mind was bound to create a more favorable atmosphere for the next Disarmament Conference. In spite of the vigorous support it received from the American representative, my proposal could not pass as originally conceived. Anyhow, the general idea of a truce was unanimously accepted, so that the moral effect of my initiative cannot be said to have been wasted.

And now, within less than three months, we will meet in Geneva for the general conference.

It is going to be a great test in which the nations of the world, and especially Europe, will show whether or not their conscience and their spirit are ripe for such a task, whether or not they will be wise enough to grasp the opportunity for making a great stride toward peaceful progress.

The conference will be the "touchstone" of our degree of civilization.

I confess to you that I see the approaching of the conference with a mixed feeling of hope and concern. I realize the tremendous responsibility of all the governments and of the men who will be their spokesmen at the conference.

How will the conference work? What is going to be its definite goal? Which the practical results?

Very difficult indeed to foresee.

In one of his last speeches President Hoover spoke of the ideal of peace as the result of a combination between realism and idealism. I believe the same can be said of the ideal of disarmament. One should not expect from the conference any spectacular results, one must not dream of an immediate and perfect solution. We, for our part, will be satisfied if it

succeeds in stopping the competition of armaments and in making a first start toward reduction. We are ready to cooperate to this end. As to the methods, I can safely say that my government is going to Geneva with an open mind, quite willing to accept such procedure as may prove to be practical and equitable for all. We believe that, in the end, it will chiefly be a question of good faith and of goodwill and I feel I can tell you that Italy will show a good measure of them both.

I wish to add that our hopes in the Disarmament Conference find much encouragement in the attitude of the American government and American public opinion. As soon as we realized in Italy all the earnest determination with which the United States would tackle the problem, we felt that it had finally a good chance of getting out from the nebulous state of an ideologic academy into the realm of practical possibilities.

To this end we will be only too glad to move with you with all our strength and all our heart.

Ladies and gentlemen, to-day the American people celebrate Thanksgiving Day. Let us hope that the next year we shall thank God for having given the nations of the whole world peace, better understanding and a sounder and more peaceful foundation.

The foregoing speeches were broadcast by the Columbia Broadcasting System over a coast to coast network, November 26, 1931, from 5:45 to 6:15 P.M., Eastern Standard Time.

The United States and Disarmament

Statement of Objectives and Program Prepared by the Conference of Organizations Interested in the Disarmament Conference.

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6 East 39th Street
New York, N. Y.

Statement of Objectives and Program

The approaching Disarmament Conference marks the most important crisis in world history since Versailles. Upon its outcome will depend not only the hopes of the peoples of the world for relief from the increasing burden of armaments, but also the course of international relations for a generation to come.

The disarmament of Germany was imposed by the Treaty of Versailles as the first step toward a general reduction and limitation of armaments. The preamble to Part V of the Peace Treaties, including the Treaty of Berlin between the United States and Germany, and the letter of Clemenceau to the German delegation, written June 16, 1919, on behalf of the Allied and Associated Powers, contain a moral, if not a legal obligation to disarmament. The General Disarmament Conference has been called for February 1932 to carry out this obligation to which the United States, as well as all members of the League of Nations, is committed. Members of the League are further committed by Articles VIII and IX of the Covenant, which makes the reduction and limitation of armaments one of the first tasks of the League.

If the General Disarmament Conference does not bring about a substantial reduction of armaments, the whole organization of the world for peace will be endangered. The German delegation repeatedly warned the Preparatory Commission that a failure to reduce would make it impossible for Germany to sign the final disarmament treaty. Even sincere advocates of peace in Germany have declared that in this event, Germany would withdraw from the League of Nations. Some German groups go further and urge the re-arming of Germany, which might precipitate an acute international crisis and would almost inevitably presage a return to the system of an armed balance of power in Europe.

Fifty-eight nations of the world through the Kellogg-Briand Pact have renounced war as an instrument of national policy and have agreed that the settlement of all international disputes shall never be sought except by pacific means. This Pact logically calls for immediate steps toward general disarmament and requires nations to put the same reliance for security in their Peace Treaties that they have hitherto put in military alliances and armaments.

I. We believe that an effective disarmament treaty should achieve three general results:

1. Recognition of the principle that all nations including Germany and the other powers already disarmed by the Treaties of Peace —are entitled to equality of treatment.
2. Drastic reduction of land, naval and air armaments, and not mere limitation at existing levels.
3. Provision for the continued progressive reduction of land, sea and air armaments by further international agreements.

II. In order to achieve these results we urge upon our Government the following program:

1. We urge that the government of the United States exert every influence at its command to insure the success of the Disarmament Conference. The United States cannot afford to take the stand that limitation of land and air armaments are purely matters of European concern. The United States has a vital concern in and a definite responsibility for the preservation of peace, which would be jeopardized by the failure of this Conference.
2. We urge the United States not only to formulate a constructive disarmament policy, but also to give serious consideration to proposals made by other nations which promise reduction in armaments. The policy of the United States should include:

   A. Acceptance of the principle of budgetary limitation, including all expenditures on land, sea and air forces as a whole, and on material (ships, guns, aircraft, etc.) of each force separately.

B. Proposals for a drastic cut in total expenditure, such as 10 per cent a year for five years; and continued advocacy of direct limitation and reduction of the weapons of land warfare, which are not so limited in the Draft Treaty.

C. Proposals for further direct reduction of naval armaments, including the abolition of submarines and of all surface war vessels over 10,000 tons and the reduction in aircraft carrier tonnage.

D. Prohibition of the preparation for and use of poison gas and bacteriological methods of warfare.

E. Acceptance of the establishment of a Permanent Disarmament Commission to watch over the execution of the Treaty.

3. We urge the United States to formulate a policy setting forth what steps we would be prepared to take to preserve the peace in case of a threatened violation of the Kellogg Pact. We believe that the first step toward making the pact more effective would be to provide by treaty agreement for conference with the other Powers.

4. We urge the appointment of the strongest possible delegation to the General Disarmament Conference, composed of civilians, with at least one outstanding statesman not officially connected with the Government.

5. We believe that the United States should give evidence of its confidence in the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means, by ratifying the World Court Protocols before the opening of the General Disarmament Conference.

The above statement signed by sixty-six officials and members of thirty-eight national organizations was addressed to President Hoover and made public June 8, 1931.

Additional copies are available at cost upon application to

STUDY CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
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